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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Fifty-sixth year

Letter dated 23 October 2001 from the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People addressed to the Secretary-General

In my capacity as Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, I would like to draw your kind attention, again as a matter of urgency, to the worsening of the security situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem.

Our Committee has been greatly alarmed by the latest deterioration of the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem. As you are aware, in the course of the past several days, the Israel Defense Forces have conducted a series of incursions into a number of Palestinian-controlled areas, contributing significantly to the escalation of the crisis. This large-scale operation, mounted ostensibly for security reasons, was supported by tanks, armoured personnel carriers and army bulldozers. As a result of shelling and gunfire from the Israel Defense Forces, more than 20 innocent Palestinian civilians, including children, lost their lives throughout the Palestinian Territory — in Bethlehem, Beit Jala, El-Bireh, Jenin, Qalqilya, Nablus, Ramallah, Tulkarm and the Gaza Strip. Many civilians have received injuries, some of them severe. In Bethlehem, churches, two hospitals, including a maternity hospital, and an orphanage came under fire. In addition, acts of settler vandalism were reported in a Hebron mosque. Classes at some 85 Palestinian schools have been suspended because of the Israeli incursions and blockade. In all, the Israel Defense Forces have reoccupied six Palestinian cities. What is particularly disquieting about these recent actions is the stated Israeli intention to expand the scope of the operations and reoccupy other "A" Areas.

The Committee considers the reoccupation by the Israel Defense Forces of the areas under full Palestinian control as yet another glaring and unequivocal illustration of Israel's lack of respect for the bilateral agreements signed to date. By occupying areas under the full control of the Palestinian Authority, creating facts on the ground, carrying out extrajudicial assassinations and destroying Palestinian houses and other property, Israel is inflicting great suffering on the Palestinian

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people and is doing irreparable damage to the principles and foundations of the peace process.

In the light of the above, our Committee calls upon Israel to withdraw its forces from all areas under Palestinian control immediately and refrain from undertaking such incursions in the future. The recent escalation of violence proves time and again that the heart of the problem is the continuing illegal occupation by Israel of the Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem. The occupying Power must heed the calls of the international community and respect the principles of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, and the provisions of all relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions. In addition, as the present conflict has a potential for widening, the Security Council should discharge its primary responsibility for the maintenance of peace and security, conferred upon it by the Member States under the Charter of the United Nations and act decisively in order to prevent further bloodshed and destruction.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the Tenth Emergency Special Session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Papa Louis Fall
Chairman
Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights
of the Palestinian People